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Struensee-Schroeder Constellation Planned to Make Erhard Bundeskanzler

According to a reliable informant, Struensee has planned to bring the CSU into a loose inner-factional coalition with Schroeder to promote Erhard Bundeskanzler. Erhard is considered by both as a more congenial boss who would, for one, scope to pursue his goal of an atomic Bundeswehr.

DISCUSSION

Frost Baemler, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung expert on NATO, states that he recently had a private conversation with Fritz ZIMMERMAN, CSU General Secretary, and Joseph STAUSS, Defense Minister, and their wives. No others were present. It is interesting to note that as a boy Struensee once tutored Baemler (now 15) in Latin. Baemler, one of the best contacts of the political section here, is reliable and requests that this information not be reported outside of United States Government circles.

Baemler claims that it is becoming more and more definite that the entire CSU is committed to supporting Erhard's candidacy. Zimmermann for one has indicated to Baemler that he would no longer support Stuehl, but would put his weight behind Erhard. Comment. The Lower Rhine of the CSU in Niederrhein - one of the seven districts in Bavaria - officially informed CSU Bonn leader Hoeckerl that they would support Erhard. With much of the CSU behind him, Struensee is attempting to achieve an understanding with Bundes Innenminister Dr. Gerhard SCHUMACHER to push Erhard's candidacy. Through such an arrangement, both would hope to gain a chief under whom they could promote their own policy concepts. They both feel that Stuehl would be very difficult to work with. Whatever Erhard's capabilities in the economic field, Baemler says that Struensee believes he would be a weak Bundeskanzler. Struensee would therefore call his own tune to as extent not possible under Adenauer. Schroeder, who is supposed to "command the Catholics of the Rhineland" would also welcome the possibility of a freer hand. Baemler admits that the Struensee-Schroeder arrangement now forming up in the CSU/CDU could fall through, but he got the impression that it was nearly definite at this point.

Struensee plans to kill two birds with one stone. Bavarian Minister-President Seidel (and fellow Frankonian) has often been mentioned as a possible successor to Erhard. Such speculation was given only a slight setback by Seidel's recent back

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...and earliest heart-case history. (Comment: The Frankfurter Allgemeine staff and the staff of the Muenchen Merkur 'truly believe' that Seidel will be Erhard's successor -- various individuals have put this information to the reporting officer.) Strauss plans to kill Seidel off such a move appointment by forcing the condition on Erhard that Mr. Strauss, must continue to lead the CSU in Bonn. In due time Strauss hopes to keep Seidel at home in Munich in the interests of mutual maximum happiness. If Schroeder will not play along Strauss will not offer him support against Erzel. (Comment: The Consulate does not believe Seidel wants the post just now.)

STRAUSS IS PURSUING AN ATOMIC ARMAMENT POLICY FOR GERMANY

Barthel reported that Strauss claims that more than a thousand German officers were being sent to the United States every month for atomic training. Strauss claimed that he deliberately belittles the atomic capabilities of the Soviet Union and its conventional strength as well as his intention to get atomic weapons because he does not want to give ready arguments to his SPD enemies.

Barthel stated that Strauss said that he intends to give the Frankfurter Allgemeine atomic capability just as rapidly as possible since he suspects that the Americans will not be willing to risk war in future situations like Berlin unless they are able to find a willing European ally. Strauss cited France and England as two countries that would definitely be more reluctant to enter the fray in the future. Consequently he wants to build the Deutsche into a real striking force so that it alone if need be can encourage the United States to take the necessary policy steps in countering an aggressive anti-Soviet foreign policy in Middle Europe. (Comment: In this connection, the CSU Press Chief states that Strauss returned from the United States determined to boost military orders placed in the United States to show the Americans that the Germans are 'returning in earnest'.)

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